

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MANILA 20006 210747Z

ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9456

INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

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EXDIS

FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, EFIN, SHUM, RP

SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS IN IFIS: ADB LOANS TO PHILIPPINES

1. WE HAVE NOW TWICE ABSTAINED ON ADB LOANS TO THE PHILIPPINES WHICH DID NOT MEET OUR CRITERIA OF HELP TO "BASIC HUMAN NEEDS." IN THE PERIOD BEFORE THE NEXT DECISION OF THIS KIND IS REQUIRED, I WOULD LIKE YOU TO HAVE OUR THOUGHTS ON THE VALUE OF THIS ACTION IN TERMS OF IMPROVING THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN THE PHILIPPINES.

2. WE SHARE WITH THE DEPARTMENT THE STRONG DESIRE TO EXERT OUR INFLUENCE TO IMPROVE THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN THE PHILIPPINES. OUR CONCERN IS THAT THE OBSTENTIONS IN THE ADB WILL NOT FURTHER THIS OBJECTIVE - AND COULD DETRACT FROM IT.

3. ANY IMPROVEMENT IN HUMAN RIGHTS POLICIES IN THE PHILIPPINES WILL BE THE DECISION OF ONE MAN: PRESIDENT MARCOS. I HAVE STARTED A DIRECT WEEKLY DIALOGUE WITH HIM. THIS WILL BE SUPPLEMENTED FROM TIME TO TIME BY VISITS FROM DICK HOLBROOKE AND OTHER DEPARTMENTAL OFFICIALS. WHILE IT IS TOO SOON TO INDICATE WHAT RESULTS MAY FLOW FROM

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PAGE 02 MANILA 20006 210747Z

THESE APPROACHES, THEY REPRESENT THE ONLY PATH THAT CAN BRING GENUINE IMPROVMENT. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THIS APPROACH CAN BE REDUCED IF MARCOS FEELS OR CLAIMS TO FEEL HEMMED IN BY PUBLICITY ABOUT OPEN U.S. PRESSURES. OUR ABSTENTIONS IN THE ADB RUN THIS RISK.

4. OUR ABSTENTION ON THE ADB LOANS HAD NO EFFECT ON THE

LOANS - WHICH WERE APPROVED. NO OTHER NATION WILL SUPPORT US. THE ACTION DID BREED RESENTMENT WITHIN THE ADB AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, WITHIN SENIOR GOP TECHNOCRATS. WISER HEADS WITHIN THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT WERE ABLE TO STIFLE POSSIBLE ANTI-US. COMMENTS BY OTHERS WHICH COULD HAVE SET BACK OUR BASIC DIALOGUE. THE TECHNOCRATS AFFECTED BY THESE ACTIONS HAVE LITTLE SAY ON HUMAN RIGHTS POLICIES BUT THEY CAN BRING TO THE SURFACE PHILIPPINE SENSITIVITIES WHICH CAN COMPLICATE OUR DIRECT EFFORTS WITH PRESIDENT MARCOS.

5. I REALIZE THAT THERE ARE OTHER ARGUMENTS ON THIS MATTER. I WOULD ASK YOUR CONSIDERATION, HOWEVER, IN JUDGING WHETHER - ASSUMING OUR DIALOGUE WITH MARCOS CONTINUES AND BEARS RESULTS - THE BENEFITS OF AN ABSTENTION ON AN ADB LOAN OUTWEIGH THE POSSIBLE DISADVANTAGES TO OUR BASIC DIALOGUE HERE IN THE PHILIPPINES.

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